



SKILLS REQUIRED FOR AN EFFECTIVE TEACHER IN THE 21ST CENTURY IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

In the 21st century, the world has been changing rapidly. Change in economy and advancement in technology are the main factors behind this transformation. This change affects the nature of employability and entrepreneurship. On the other hand, use of technology among the masses by means of mobile phone, computer, internet etc has become a common phenomenon. Thus, the teachers, in the present era, have to deal with students having easy access to the world of information and technology. Therefore, they need to be equipped with some skills to prepare their students to face the global challenges. Moreover, India, being the second largest populated country, has some other issues like poverty, multilingual, cross-cultural, overcrowded classrooms. There has already been a change in the role of a teacher from being a transmitter of knowledge to be a facilitator of constructing knowledge. This paper highlights the skills required for an effective teacher in the 21st century in India. Through this qualitative study the following 21st century skills came into limelight- critical thinking and problem solving, creativity, communication, leadership, Information and Communication Technology, economic and financial literacy, environmental and conservation literacy. This paper finds out that many teachers in primary and secondary levels in India do not have proper knowledge and skill in using Technology in general and internet in particular. The untrained teachers teaching in primary, upper primary and secondary levels have been pursuing their professional training. They also need to have working knowledge in using teaching learning materials by means of Technology. Above all, teachers must take effective steps in their teaching learning process to develop the moral values of the students.

KEYWORDS: Skills, 21st Century, Teacher

INTRODUCTION:

With the impact of globalisation and rapid advancement in the world of Science and Technology the world has been changing radically. The changing world demands the upcoming generation to be equipped with knowledge and skills to meet the needs of the globalised world. Therefore, the role of the teacher of 21st century has become very challenging, complex and multifaceted. This qualitative study was carried out to find out whether the present day teacher can cope up with the changes ushered in the last few decades. The main objectives of the study are to explore the 21st century skills that are essential for the teacher to prepare students to face the challenges of 21st century and to meet their individual as well as global needs.

Teaching is one of the noble professions for educated people. It is rather a service that can be rendered by men to God because to serve man is to serve God. Teaching is a profession that is typically driven by ethical motive. Due to drastic changes in educational fields, the teaching profession faces novel challenges in the 21st century.

"...the aim of 21st century teaching as the development of knowledge, higher skills (such as the 4C's of creativity, critical thinking, communication, collaboration) and character, as well as, the establishment of life long learning habits and an ability to learn how to learn with technology as the central roles in the new picture of teacher effectiveness." (Stronges, 2015).

Cambridge Dictionary defines skill as 'an ability to do an activity or job well, especially, you have practiced it'. Business dictionary refers to skill as 'an ability and capacity acquired through deliberate, systematic and sustained effort to smoothly and adaptively carry out Complex activities or job functions involving ideas (cognitive skills), thing(technical skills) and /or People (interpersonal skills). Now, the term, 21st century skills, refers to a broad set of knowledge, skills, work habits and characteristic features that are supposed to be essentially important to succeed in present world, especially in academic programmes and contemporary careers.

BACKGROUND OF 21ST CENTURY:

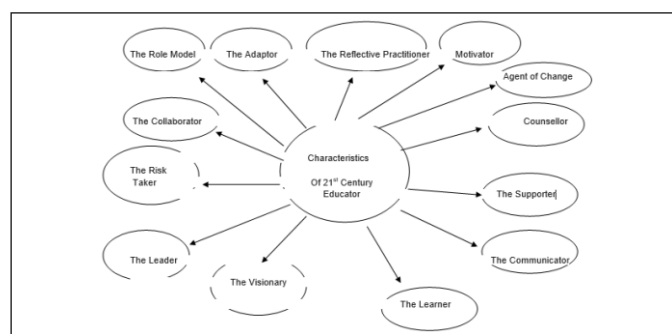
Now, globalisation is the key factor that effects the economy, culture and information, International relationship, mobilisation of individuals. It brings up a complete revolution in communication media. Social media like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram communicate and effect human relationships. The revolution in the world of Technology represents both a challenge and an opportunity to education system. The world also faces some serious problems like racial conflicts and violence, increasing unemployment, a decline in moral and ethnic values, changes in the role of family ties, in the process of socialization of children. This challenges and problems should be overcome with urgency. Here in lies the need of changes among the 21st century teachers who can be the instrument in the development of humanity as a whole.

UNESCO/IBE included the following roles that teachers are expected to follow in the context of globalisation at the 45th session of the International Conference on Education held at Geneva in 1996.

1. Promoting skills and competency in literacy and numeracy, sensitivity to the environment and harmony between the school and its community;
2. Helping the growth of basic skills and attitudes for proper and continued development of cognitive, social, moral and emotional development;
3. Transmitting culture and knowledge and help students become aware of the world community;
4. Nourishing creative and Critical abilities;
5. Encouraging adaptability in a dynamic and ever changing society;
6. Helping each individual achieve full self-actualization to become a fully functional number of society;
7. Providing the students and the community with an admirable role as a professional teacher;
8. Ensuring students' physical well being;
9. Becoming accountable to the community and students parents.

SKILLS REQUIRED FOR A 21ST CENTURY TEACHER:

The present era bids adieu to the traditional 'chalk and talk' method. Strangers (2015) says "teachers must plan to be facilitators who provide scaffolding to support students in developing their own personal ways of knowing and thinking." Andrew Churches(2008) shows the characteristics of the 21st century teachers through the following model.



Tony Wagner (2008) identified "7 survival skills" that are needed for the modern workplace:

1. Critical thinking and problem solving
2. Collaboration
3. Agility and adaptability
4. Initiative and entrepreneurialism
5. Effective oral and written communication
6. Accessing and analysing information
7. Curiosity and imagination

P21's Framework for 21st century Learning grouped the 21st century skills in the following way:

Learning and Innovative Skills	Digital Literacy Skills	Career and Life Skills
1. Critical thinking and problem solving	1. Information literacy	1. Flexibility and adaptability
2. Creativity and innovation	2. Media Literacy	2. Initiative and self-direction
3. Communication	3. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) literacy	3. Social and cross-cultural interaction
4. Collaboration		4. Productivity and accountability
		5. Leadership and responsibility.

SKILLS DISCUSSED IN BROADER PERSPECTIVES:

The skills specified by different educationists are meant to face the diverse challenges that are the result of this rapidly changing society. Teachers are there to shape the mind and character of students and to prepare them to collaborate and co-operate in the globalised world. Hence, the skills required for the teachers in this new era are discussed in broader perspectives.

CRITICAL THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING:

It is the common tendency of human mind to be easily influenced rather infatuated by others. Therefore, teachers need to develop the skill of critical thinking and problem solving. Critical thinking is the objective and scientific process of reasoning, conceptualizing, analysing, synthesizing and evaluating information to make a decision or to reach a conclusion. Critical thinking traces the way to the ability of problem solving. Teachers need to know the methods and techniques to cope with different problems encountered by the students in school hours and also in their personal lives in order to reach a specific goal or solution.

CREATIVITY:

The skill of creativity always motivates teachers to do something new. With their skills, teachers present learning materials in innovative ways disregarding the traditional methods to draw the attention of students of different cultural groups and of different needs. Moreover, artistry in his personal life inspires students to imitate it to decorate their own personal life. A creative teacher is always curious and imaginative. Rise and development of this technological world originate from man's curiosity and imagination.

INITIATIVE AND SELF DIRECTION:

Participation in school organisation, administration and management and in its functioning and control enhances the sense of responsibility and initiations among the teachers. In a democratic country like India, a self-directed teacher can impart among the students the qualities like -decision making, leadership, responsible citizen, perseverance, cooperation and self discipline. "Teachers have a crucial role to play in preparing the learners not only to face the future with confidence but to build it with purpose and responsibility. The importance of the role of the teacher as an agent of change, promoting understanding and tolerance has never been more obvious than today. It is likely to become even more in the 21st century. (J.Delors, et.al., 1996)

RESEARCH AND INSTRUCTION:

Research, especially, action research enables teachers to look into the nature of educational problems and it helps them to report and communicate their ideas to others. It improves the skill of questioning too. It also determines the changes to be introduced in the management, the curriculum and co-curricular activities in respect of the evolving conditions of the globalised societies. Students of different physical, affective and cognitive abilities require different instructions to learn. A 21st century teacher must be equipped with different instruction skills. "...differentiated instruction enables teachers to adjust the curriculum materials,

activities and assessment technique to ensure that all students in a mixed classroom can have different avenues to process new knowledge and develop skills, even while having equal access to high-quality learning. (Sousa and Tomlinson 2011)

COMMUNICATION:

Communication is a two way process of sharing a concept, fact, idea, principle or theory. Good communication skills develop interpersonal relationship between teacher and his pupils. It helps teachers to impart his lessons effectively. A good communicator is also a good listener. verbal, non verbal, writing and visual- all types of communication are effective in teaching-learning process. In this era of Technology, visual communication by means of TV programmes, watching a film or drama etc provides an opportunity to view facial expressions and gestures. This type of communication has a greater impact on the students.

LEADERSHIP:

In a democratic country like India, having one of the largest economic markets, a good leader, in its real sense, is the urgent need of this time. Leadership is a practical skill of guiding or leading individuals to reach their goal. In this sense a teacher must be a good leader in presenting instructional materials, organising co-curricular activities, inculcating the spirit of teamwork, collaboration and cooperation among students.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT):

In the passage of time to what destination, the modern world has reached, is led by technological innovations. The reason behind the progress and prosperity of China, being the fastest growing economy of the world, is the advancement of Technology. The 21st century is the era of Technology itself. Most of the students in urban areas are skillful in using mobile, laptop, computer, iPad. The communicate with the people associated with them by means of Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram etc. Even the students from rural areas also use mobile and computer. Technology helps them to get information easily. They satisfy their thirst for knowledge using internet. Therefore, the role of a teacher has changed in this era from transmitting knowledge to pave the way of knowing and thinking individually. Here in lies the need of a teacher having more and technological skills. They should also guide students in proper use of technology from ethical point of view. Technology, if misused, can bring disaster in the life of students by means of its easy access to pornographic sites.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL LITERACY:

The chance of being employed increases the demand of an Educational stream. Teachers must be aware of the fields of study that are suitable for being employed. In the 21st century, self employment and entrepreneurship is greatly increased.

SOCIAL AND CROSS CULTURAL INTERACTION:

People of different languages, culture, dresses and religions live in India. In multilingual, cross-cultural classroom teachers should have proper communication skills for sharing ideas and empathy and social skills to create an environment suitable for instruction.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSERVATION LITERACY:

Indiscriminate industrialisation and urbanisation have invited unwanted problems like worldwide climatic change, extinction of some species of animals, birds and aquatic lives. This results in world wide climatic change, global warming, emergence of fatal diseases. It is the urgent need of 21st century for everybody to be conscious about environmental pollution, conservation of natural resources as well as endangered animal worlds.

CONCLUSION:

"The old order changeth yielding place to new" ("Idylls of king" by Tennyson). Change is the rule of nature. Hence, this world has been changing in every aspect- social, cultural, environmental, economic, technological, even, in human behaviour and relationship. This study was done to find out the changing demands in the 21st century as well as the skills required for teachers to cope up with the changes. In the story of the two frogs- one jumped out from the pan of hot water to encounter the changing condition. The other remained in the pan to adapt with the hot water and finally died. Likewise, to meet the Global challenges; to be a part of world wide economic growth and prosperity; to mutually share our resources and technological skills; we must change ourselves. In India teachers hold the most respectable position in society as they frame the mind of students. In a report published by World Bank, it was reported that there are about 130000 single teacher schools in India. That means lack of teachers in schools is a common phenomenon in Indian education system. As per the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Bill, 2017, the untrained teachers in primary and secondary levels will get time till 2019 to complete their professional training. So, untrained teachers need to complete their professional training as early as possible. Moreover, from our practical experience, we find many teachers having no basic knowledge in using internet and other technological skills. Moreover, to develop moral values; to stop the prevalent degradation of ethics in political and economic fields, teachers must take a leading role. Now, time has come for them to renew themselves in the light of the demands of the 21st century to mould the millions of Minds for their future journey to a world reigned by technology but ruled by collaboration, co-operation and world peace.

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